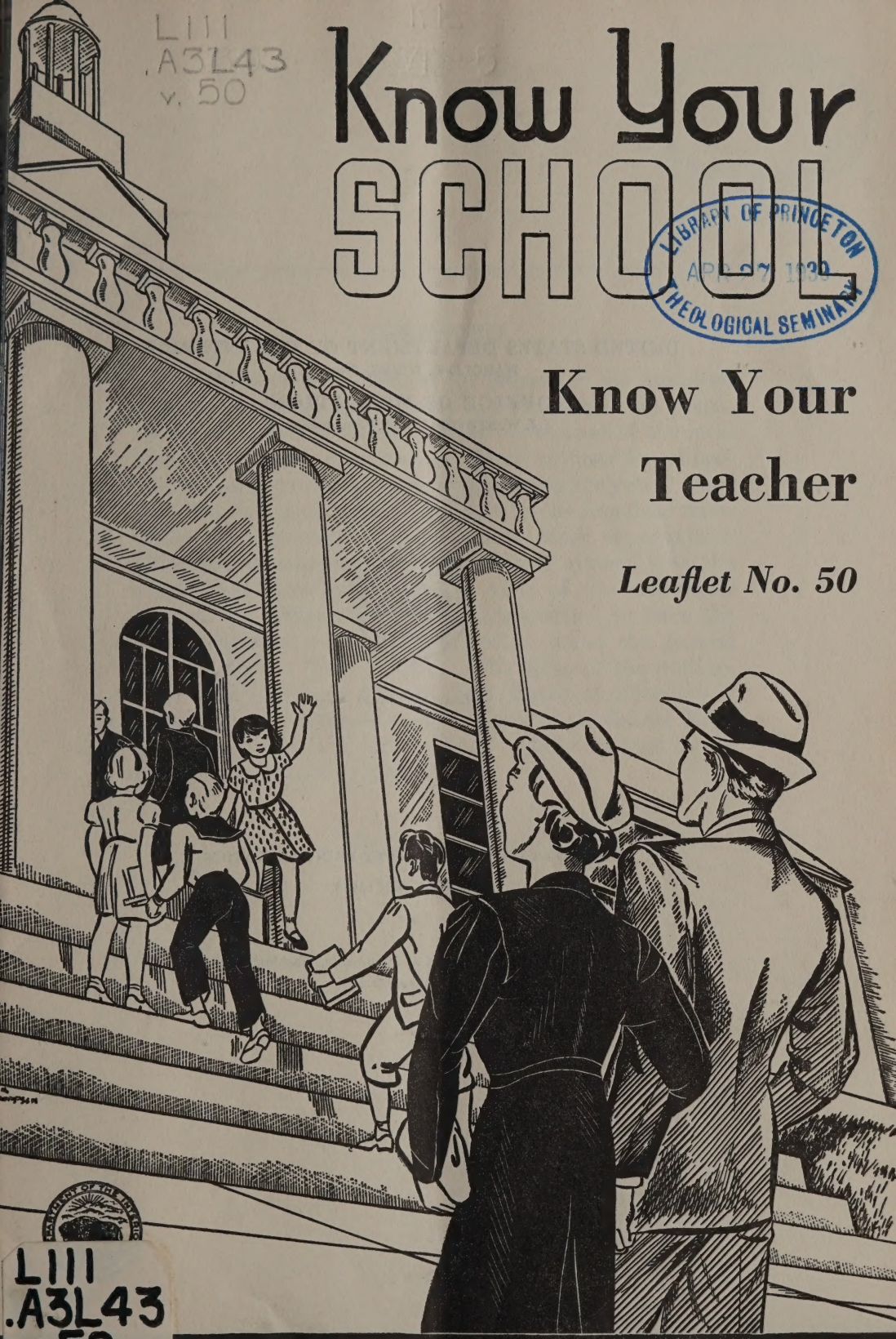
L111
.A3L43
v. 50

Know Your SCHOOL

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Know Your Teacher

Leaflet No. 50



L111
.A3L43
v. 50

United States Department of the Interior • *Office of Education*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HAROLD L. ICKES, *Secretary*

OFFICE OF EDUCATION
J. W. STUDEBAKER, *Commissioner*

LEAFLET No. 50

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1938

✦

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.
Price 5 cents

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
APR 27 1939
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FOREWORD

The Office of Education, at the request of the American Association of University Women last year, began the preparation of a series of study outlines for the use of the local branches of that organization. Four outlines in mimeographed form were issued at intervals during the year. They met with such good response not only by the American Association of University Women but by other organizations interested in studying the public-school system that the supply was soon exhausted. In view of the continuing interest, the Office of Education has decided to have the outlines printed as a series of leaflets under the general heading "Know Your School." The titles of the outlines already prepared are "Know Your Board of Education," "Know Your Superintendent," "Know Your School Principal," and "Know Your Teacher." Other outlines in the series will be issued at intervals this year.

BESS GOODYKOONTZ,
Assistant Commissioner of Education.

KNOW YOUR TEACHER

By

W. S. Deffenbaugh

Chief, Division of American School Systems

A thorough knowledge of a school system cannot be gained merely by visiting with the superintendent, supervisors, and principals, and by riding around town looking at school buildings. Teachers, also, should be visited in order to learn about the schools of a community, for in the final analysis, the teacher makes the school what it is. This being the case, there is no one else in a school system with whom the people of a community should be better acquainted.

In the following pages only a few of the things one should know about teachers are briefly stated. However, books, magazine articles, and studies concerning teachers are available in any good library. Such books, articles, and studies should be used to supplement the statements contained in the outline. These statements, as the reader will recognize, are general and will need modification to fit each situation. Some of them may be challenged, but if they afford texts for discussion groups the purpose of the outline will be served.

A few suggestions for investigation and discussion and a few references are appended.

QUALIFICATIONS

What should be the qualifications of elementary and high-school teachers?

Every teacher, whether elementary or high-school, should possess a broad general education and should have had special preparation for teaching. Graduation from a 4-year college, including courses in education is

not too high a standard for elementary school teachers. Probably the idea held by some persons that elementary school teachers do not need this amount of preparation originated in the days when it was thought that anyone could teach who could pronounce the words in the school reader and spelling book, who could solve the problems in the school arithmetic, who could ascertain by referring to the textbook in history or geography whether the children could answer the questions contained in the book, and who could "keep order." Since the elementary school teacher as well as the high-school teacher should have a broad, general background, the narrow preparation provided by a 2-year normal school course is not sufficient. This fact is being recognized and the trend is toward 4-year courses for elementary school teachers. This amount of preparation as indicated in another section of the outline has implications with respect to the salaries of elementary school teachers.

In the case of high-school teachers, not only is a broad general education necessary but also a thorough knowledge of their special subject-matter field or fields. Since the work of the high-school teacher is much more specialized than that of elementary school teachers, 5 years of college preparation to provide time for specialization might be the standard for beginning high-school teachers.

A college degree, however, does not in itself guarantee that its holder can teach school. The possessor of such degree if he or she is to succeed as a teacher must have a profound and sympathetic understanding of children and must possess those intangible qualifications usually called "personality."

As stated by a committee of teachers in the Eighth Yearbook of the Department of Classroom Teachers, National Education Association:

> Like the good teachers of all ages, the modern teacher has mastered bodies of knowledge or acquired skills that others should possess. He has the ability to stimulate and to assist others in acquiring these attainments and skills. He is, in addition, a person of wide interests and a considerable

culture which he is desirous and capable of sharing with his students and coworkers. He is a friend as well as a student of humanity.

Today, as in past generations, the good teacher is honest, sincere, intelligent, industrious, and morally upright. Today more than ever before he must be open-minded, alert, tactful, sympathetic, courageous, and cooperative. He is trained definitely for the profession of teaching. He is a social being and participates effectively in the social and civic life of his community. He seeks to exemplify in himself, and to develop in his students, such habits, attitudes, and ideals as will serve best both the individual and the body politic.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

What are the duties and responsibilities of teachers?

This question may be answered by some "teach school"; but what is meant by teaching school? In contrast to the old days when the teacher's job was to assign a certain number of pages in a book, and then to hear pupils recite what they had learned, the teacher in a modern classroom has many responsibilities. She is concerned with such problems as: Helping pupils to see the reason for work that is done; planning assignments and activities cooperatively with them; guiding them in evaluating the quality of their oral and written contributions; providing for slow, average, and rapid workers in the same class; directing group discussions of various types; teaching pupils how to study; varying method to fit the subject or the type of child (illustration, demonstration, excursion, drill, aesthetic experience); providing interesting and concrete materials for work; discovering children's difficulties and supplying a remedy; and making it possible for every pupil to succeed at some piece of work each day.

Among the many other duties and responsibilities are: The preparation of various kinds of reports concerning the pupils; the supervision of study halls; supervision of the so-called extracurriculum activities; attending and participating in teachers' meetings and meetings of the Parent-Teacher Association; taking courses by extension; holding conferences with individual parents and with individual pupils; serving on permanent and

special committees; building courses of study; and the making of lesson plans. It is thus evident that the modern teacher's day cannot be measured by the clock.

RELATIONSHIPS

What should be the relationship of teachers to the board of education and the executive?

In every school system certain officials should be responsible for certain matters. The board of education must be responsible for the adoption of policies and the superintendent must be responsible for putting the policies into operation. The relationship of the teacher to the board of education is, therefore, indirect and her relation to the superintendent is largely through the school principal. This, however, does not mean that teachers should not have access to the board of education and to the superintendent of schools. Boards of education and superintendents in any democratically administered school system seek the advice of teachers regarding matters of policy and regarding the execution of such matters. In general, the official to whom teachers should be directly responsible is the school principal, and the relationship should be one of mutual cooperation. Any plans that an individual teacher or a group of teachers may have looking toward the improvement of the schools should be discussed with the principal before being presented to the superintendent and the board of education, and any far-reaching plan that the principal has to propose to the superintendent should first be discussed with the teachers. This implies that schools will be staffed by principals and teachers who have a professional point of view.

What should be the relationship of the teacher to patrons and the community in general?

Once upon a time when the teacher "boarded around" it was possible for her to become intimately acquainted with every parent in the school district and to talk with the parents about school problems. Now that the teacher has her own boarding place or apartment, about

the only opportunity she has of becoming acquainted with parents is the time they visit the school or attend parent-teacher meetings. The teacher should, however, as occasions arise, call upon parents to discuss problems relating to the education of their children.

Since teachers and parents should know one another, parents should be encouraged to visit the schools not only upon special visiting days but at other times so that school and home problems related to education may be fully discussed. The parent-teacher meeting also affords an opportunity for the discussion of such problems.

Various opinions have been expressed regarding the relation of the teacher to the community in general. Some persons would say to the teacher with respect to her community activities, "Thou shalt or thou shalt not." In fact, school board rules prescribing what a teacher shall or shall not do out of school hours are not unknown. Such prescriptions cannot be defended on any grounds of logic or on any grounds of justice to the teaching profession. There is no more reason for a community to prescribe what a teacher's activities in the community shall be than for it to prescribe what the activities of persons in other professions shall be. Teachers should be just as free as other citizens to take part or not to take part in clubs and various organizations in the community. However, since each community has its customs that should be respected, a teacher before accepting a position should know the type of community into which she is going and be prepared to meet its standards.

THE SELECTION OF TEACHERS

How should teachers be selected?

The selection of teachers is and will continue to be among the most important responsibilities of school executives. In the early days of the public-school system the selection was, however, a relatively simple matter since persons with little preparation were em-

ployed to "keep school." Their selection required no particular professional qualification on the part of the person or persons making the selection. The evolution of methods of selecting and appointing teachers has been somewhat as follows: (1) By town meeting; (2) by the town committee; (3) by the school committee or board of education; and (4) by the superintendent of schools.

Changes in the method of selecting teachers were accompanied and necessitated by the importance and difficulty of selecting the teaching personnel. The number of teachers has increased rapidly, the curriculum has been broadened, methods of teaching have changed greatly, the number of the activities of teachers has increased—all of which now make the selection of teachers a professional matter that should be in the hands of the superintendent of schools who should seek the advice and assistance of supervisors and principals, when he selects teachers. There are, however, still a few cities in which the board of education or a committee of the board appoints teachers without official participation by the superintendent. This is the case in about 1.5 percent of the cities of the country. In about 47 percent the superintendent of schools takes the initial step by nominating teachers and in about 24 percent he makes the appointment to be confirmed or rejected by the board; in about 3 percent other procedures are used such as the selection of teachers from an eligible list as determined by examination; and in about 24 percent a combination of methods is used.

The selection of teachers being among the most important responsibilities of school executives, they should make every effort to locate desirable candidates instead of making selections entirely from a list of applicants. Visits should be made to teachers colleges and schools of education to interview members of the graduating classes, to observe their teaching in the demonstration school, and to inquire of members of the faculty regarding the teaching ability of members of the class. Applicants from other school systems should be visited, their classroom work observed, and their supervisors and others consulted in order to obtain additional informa-

tion about the character of the work of the applicants. In brief, all the pertinent information concerning persons being considered for teaching positions should be collected and analyzed. After certain standards of preparation have been decided upon, only merit and efficiency should be considered in the appointment of a teacher and in their retention in the school system.

THE ECONOMIC WELFARE OF TEACHERS

What provision should be made for the economic welfare of teachers?

The economic welfare of teachers is a matter that concerns not only the teachers themselves but also the public. The first and chief provision for such welfare should be a salary schedule that provides for a living wage in the broadest sense of the term, and not for a mere hand to mouth existence. In the formulation of such schedule several principles need to be observed. Among those which are set forth in the Sixth Year Book of the Department of Classroom Teachers, National Education Association, and which seem sound are:

> Salaries should be related to appropriate standards of living for teachers; salaries should be graduated from minimum to maximum according to the teachers' qualifications; persons in the same type of position should receive equal salaries for equivalent training and experience; the schedule should avoid overpaying beginning teachers at the expense of teachers with long records of successful experience; the incentive offered by increments in salary should be spread over a large proportion of the teaching career; the salary schedule should be sufficiently flexible to care for special cases of unusual merit.

That teachers of equal preparation and experience, whether they teach in the elementary or in the high school, should receive the same salary merits consideration. A schedule of this type is known as the single-salary schedule and has been adopted in some cities as a means of obtaining better-prepared teachers for the elementary school grades and of retaining in these grades those teachers who have the amount of preparation necessary to teach in high-school grades, but who are

better adapted to elementary than to high-school teaching.

The single-salary schedule is also a recognition of the fact that the work of the elementary school teacher is just as important and just as exacting as the work of the high-school teacher. Such a schedule would: Tend to eliminate class consciousness among teachers; attract better-prepared teachers to the elementary schools; permit the transfer of teachers without financial loss from positions for which they are not adapted to positions in which they can render better service; tend to prevent highly qualified elementary school teachers holding college degrees from asking to be transferred to high school in order to obtain an increase in salary; help place the work of the elementary school in the estimation of the public on a par with the work of the high school; and emphasize higher standards of general and professional preparation.

One of the points that also merits special consideration is the "salary spread"; that is, the difference between the minimum and the maximum. The minimum should be such as to offer an incentive for entering the teaching profession, but it should not be so high as to prevent the adoption of a high maximum, which should be to the person expecting to make teaching his or her profession a greater incentive than a high minimum. The maximum salary should be at least twice, or probably three times, as great as the minimum, with provision in special cases for an over-maximum salary.

Provision for the economic welfare of teachers should also be made by means of a sound teacher-retirement system. Within recent years the public has been realizing more and more that it has a responsibility in providing for a retirement system for teachers. Such systems, however, should not be established merely as a matter of sentiment or of philanthropy or as a reward for past services, but to assist in improving the schools. It is a well-known fact that school superintendents and boards of education often hesitate to dismiss an aged teacher who has taught in the schools for many years, but who can no longer render efficient service. In order

to protect the schools without working undue hardship upon teachers, retirement systems are considered necessary. About 30 States now have such systems.

Among other matters relating to teacher welfare that may be mentioned for the consideration of study groups are tenure, amount of sick leave on full or part pay, and sabbatical leave on part pay. The effect of each of these, as well as of other welfare provisions, upon the schools is, however, the main point to consider.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

1. What are the minimum educational qualifications for the certification of elementary and of high-school teachers in your State? What qualifications does the board of education in your school district require beyond the minimum State requirements for certification?
2. Is a physical examination required?
3. What kinds or grades of teachers' certificates are issued in your State and what general and professional preparation is required for each type of certificate? Should life certificates be issued or should certificates be renewable from time to time?
4. Should teachers be certificated on the basis of college credentials only or should they be certificated partly on credentials and partly on examination, or entirely by examination?
5. Should teachers have as much general and professional preparation for their profession as lawyers, dentists, and physicians have for their respective profession?
6. In what ways does teaching merit recognition as a profession? In what ways does it not merit such recognition?
7. Has your State teachers' association advocated high educational standards for entrance to the teaching profession? What other means looking toward the improvement of the schools has it advocated?
8. If you were a school superintendent how would you proceed to select teachers?

9. What means should a superintendent of schools use in selecting teachers?
10. What arguments can you give for and against the competitive examination of applicants for teaching positions? Should the size of city be taken into consideration in presenting your arguments?
11. In the selection of teachers should sex, place of residence, economic status, or marital status, be taken into consideration? Is it good policy to employ only home teachers, or even a majority of such teachers?
12. Should a teacher accept a position without inquiring about the schools and community customs in order to ascertain whether she could adapt herself to the schools and to the community?
13. What percentage of the teachers in your city are new to the school system? If there is a large amount of turn-over in the teaching staff what is the principal cause of such turn-over? To what extent is the turn-over due to the failure of the superintendent to recommend teachers for reappointment?
14. Does your State have a teacher-tenure law? If it does, what are the provisions of the law? What are the advantages and the disadvantages of a teacher-tenure law?
15. Does your State have a teacher-retirement system? If so, what are its provisions? In what ways might the system be improved?
16. Are teachers in your city granted sabbatical leave on part pay? Why should teachers, or why should they not, be granted such leave?
17. Are the teachers in your school district paid reasonable minima and maxima salaries? Should there be considerable difference between the minimum and the maximum?
18. Should salary increases be automatic or should factors other than length of service also be considered, such as merit and efficiency as determined by a rating scale?
19. Why should the economic welfare of teachers be a matter of concern to the public?

20. Should elementary school teachers who have had 4 or 5 years' preparation for teaching in elementary schools receive the same initial salary as high-school teachers who have spent the same number of years preparing to teach in high school?
21. The salary being the same which would you prefer, an elementary school or a high-school teaching position? Why?
22. The average number of pupils per elementary school teacher is usually greater than the average number of pupils per high-school teacher, and elementary school classes are usually larger than high-school classes. Why is this? Should the fact that high-school teachers teach several hundred different pupils during a week and elementary school teachers teach only about 35 or 40 different pupils be taken into consideration?
23. What is the function of a teacher's council?
24. Compare teaching with other vocations in the opportunities for personal development, in opportunities for service to society, and in financial rewards over a period of years.
25. Should teachers have a part in the selection of textbooks, the preparation of courses of study, and the planning of school buildings?
26. In your community what helpful relations exist between teachers and parents? Between teachers and pupils?

REFERENCES

ALMACK, JOHN C., *and* LANG, ALBERT R. Problems of the teaching profession. Boston, New York, etc., Houghton Mifflin company, 1925.

CARPENTER, W. W., *and* RUFI, JOHN. The teacher and secondary school administration. New York, Ginn and company, 1931.

CHAMBERLAIN, LEO M. The teacher and school organization. New York, Prentice-Hall, 1936.

CUBBERLEY, E. P. Public-school administration. Division II, The teaching corps. New York, Houghton Mifflin company, 1929.

GRAVES, FRANK PIERREPONT. The administration of American education, Part II, Teachers and personnel problems. New York, The Macmillan company, 1932.

HART, FRANK W. Teachers and teaching by ten thousand high-school seniors. New York, The Macmillan company, 1934.

LEWIS, ERVIN EUGENE. Personnel problems of the teaching staff. New York, The Century company, 1925.

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION. Administrative practices affecting classroom teachers. Part I, The selection and appointment of teachers, Research bulletin, vol. x, No. 1; and Part II, The retention, promotion, and improvement of teachers, Research bulletin, vol. x, No. 2. Washington, D. C. The association, 1932.

——— A handbook on teacher-tenure. Research bulletin, vol. xiv, September 1936.

——— Salaries of school employees, 1936–37. Research bulletin, vol. xv, No. 2, March 1937.

——— Teacher-retirement systems and social security. Research bulletin, vol. xv, No. 3, May 1937.

——— The preparation of teachers' salary schedules. Part I: Administrative and fact-finding procedures. Research bulletin, vol. xiv, No. 1; and Part II: Drafting the schedule, vol. xiv, No. 2, March 1936.

——— Department of classroom teachers. Sixth yearbook: The economic welfare of teachers, June 1931.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. National survey of the education of teachers, vol. ii, Teacher personnel in the United States. Washington, D. C., United States Government printing office. (Bulletin, 1933, No. 10, vol. ii.)

——— National survey of secondary education. Selection and appointment of teachers. Washington, D. C., United States Government printing office, 1932. (Bulletin 1932, No. 17, monograph No. 12.)

——— Teacher-retirement systems. Principal provisions of State systems. Washington, D. C. United States Government printing office, 1934. (Bulletin, 1934, No. 6.)

——— The legal status of married women teachers. Washington, D. C., United States Government printing office, 1934. (Pamphlet No. 47.)

See "The Education Index" *and* "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature" for articles in journals of education relating to elementary and high-school teachers.

○